An unnamed subspecies of *Euphonia rufiventris* from Venezuela and northern Brazil

by Robert W. Dickerman

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The Rufous-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia rufiventris* ranges from the Sierra de Macarena in Colombia and the Rio Orinoco in Venezuela south to the Matto Grosso of Brazil and central Bolivia. Hellmayr (1936) briefly, and Zimmer (1943) in detail, described the colour differences between the northeastern (Venezuelan and northern Amazonian) populations and those of Peru. Zimmer felt, however, that variation throughout the species range was so great that it was doubtful that a division into subspecies was supportable. In re-examining the series in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), I found that by taking as standards for comparison 2 males from the Rio Orinoco and Cerro Duida area of Venezuela and 2 from the upper Rio Amazon of Peru, and 2 females from the Rio Negro of northern Brazil and 2 from Peru, I was able to place all but 2 of 71 adult males (97%), and all but 4 of 36 (90%) females to the northern and southern populations without recourse to label locality data.

Todd (1913) described the southern form as *Tanagra rufiventris colorata* (type locality Rio Surutu, Santa Cruz, Bolivia) but had only one pair from Venezuela for comparison, the male of which was an exceptionally pale individual. The source of Vieillot's type specimen of *rufiventris* was not known, and Todd assumed that it came from within the range of the northern race. Hellmayr (1919 – not 1920 as cited in Hellmayr 1936) designated Iquitos, Peru as the type locality for *rufiventris*. Todd, as indicated by his unpublished notes in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, later realized his mistake, writing that he described *colorata* "under the supposition that the Venezuelan bird was typical – which is not now certain . . . the form from Caura Venezuela is the one that ought to have been named". The only other name in the synonymy of the species (Hellmayr 1936) is *Euphonia bicolor* Strickland 1850. Strickland's type specimen was from Peru, and *bicolor* is thus a synonym of the nominate race. The northeastern population may therefore be known as:

Euphonia rufiventris carnegiei subsp. nov.

Holotype. Adult male, No. 433922 in American Museum of Natural History, New York. Collected "Rio Orinoco, orilla derecho, Boca del Rio Ocamo" [on the right-hand side of the mouth of the Rio Ocamo], Territorio Amazonas, Venezuela, on 25 March 1929, by the Olalla brothers, Alphonse and Ramon.

Description. Similar to *E. r. rufiventris,* but adult males are darker brown ventrally (belly, flanks and undertail coverts) and darker blue dorsally; females are darker, more olive, less yellow-green, often with a weak metallic-blue gloss dorsally.

Range. Southern portions of Amazonas and Bolivar in Venezuela, and northern Brazil in the drainages of the Rios Uaupes and Negro. Probably occurs throughout tropical Amazonian lowlands north of the river.

Specimens examined. All the specimens examined by Zimmer are still available in the AMNH except for 1 male and 2 females from Chuchurras, Peru, and the 6 specimens from Bolivia that he borrowed from the Carnegie Museum.

The following 23 additional specimens in the AMNH collection (most of which were available to Zimmer, but were not listed in his paper), and 20 (Venezuela 2, Brazil 18) from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CM) were examined:– *Venezuela*: Cerro Duida region, 1 ♂; mouth of the Rio Ocamo, 1 ♀; Upper Caura River, 1 ♂, 1 ♀ (CM). *Colombia*: Mt. Macarena, 4 ♂♂. *Brazil*: Rio Tapajos, 2 ♂♂ (CM); Rio Solimoes, 6 ♂♂, 1 ♀ (CM); Rio Purus, 4 ♂♂, 5 ♀♀ (CM). *Ecuador*: Rio Napo, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; Concepcion (Cotapino), 2 ♂♂; Rio Suno above Avila, 3 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀; Rio Suno "abajo" (=below Avila), 1 ♂, 1 ♀; "Ecuador", 3 ♂♂. *Peru*: Luisiana, Rio Apurimac, 1 ♂; Chanchamayo (Junin), 1 ♂, 1 ♀.

Remarks. Specimens used for colour comparisons were of comparable museum age. Males vary somewhat more in dorsal coloration than they do ventrally. Two males from the Sierra de Macarena of Colombia, a locality intermediate between the northern and southern populations, are dark, while 2 are paler, as could be expected from a truly intermediate population, though no prediction was contemplated before the comparisons themselves were made. Only 2 adult males from along the Rio Negro of the 43 available from north of the Rio Amazon could not be assigned to subspecies other than on the basis of locality. All males from Ecuador, Peru and Brazil south of the Amazon were readily separable from *carnegiei*. Zimmer (1943) wrote that males of the northern population had a very limited area of bright yellow on the sides of the breast; however, I believe this was due to the make up of the specimens. I see no difference in the depth of the yellow between the 2 subspecies.

The single male from Venezuela in the Carnegie Museum collection is pale brown ventrally, and is separable from only half of the 12 males from Brazil by that character; however it is darker blue dorsally than any of them.

Females vary more in coloration than do males. Four of 19 (17%) from Venezuela and the Rio Negro are as yellow-green dorsally as are females from Brazil and Peru. All females from Peru, Ecuador and Brazil south of the Amazon are paler than *carnegiei*. Two immature males from Peru are darker, colder olive-green dorsally, and thus resemble females of *carnegiei* more closely in that character. No males from the northern subspecies in similar plumage were seen.

I name this subspecies for the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, whose rich holdings of South American birds formed the basis for so much of the work of the late W. E. C. Todd.

Acknowledgements

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A revaluation of the systematic status of the Italian Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix italica* Hartert

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Hartert (1917) named a new subspecies of the Grey Partridge as *Perdix perdix italica,* based on material originating from central Italy, and fixed as type a male obtained by Squilloni at Badia di Passignano, Chianti, 20 January 1905. This specimen (in fact a young male), and 13 paratypes from the Rothschild collection, are now preserved at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The new race was described as different "at a glance from the Central European *Perdix perdix perdix*" and so closely similar to "the Pyrenean *P. p. hispaniensis* (=*charrela*) that at first they seemed to be practically indistinguishable". However, Hartert also added that a more careful comparison showed that the Italian birds differed from *P. p. hispaniensis* thus: "the upperside less dark and distinctly more brownish; jugulum and chest not so dark grey . . . the male differs from *P. p. perdix* chiefly by the less rusty or rufous upperside, especially dark brown instead of rufous crossbars on the rump and much darker, less reddish brown spots on the upper wing coverts. The females, because of their coarser markings with the wider light shaft lines and spots, look rather different from females of *P. p. perdix*" (Hartert 1917).

According to Lovari (1975), and hence King (1978–1979), *P. p. italica* is a subspecies in danger of extinction in most of its former range (i.e. the greater part of the Italian peninsula). Its reduction in distribution and abundance in Italy was caused, according to Lovari (1975), by "hunting, changes in agricultural practice, competition from introduced Grey Partridges of other subspecies". There are, in fact, historical records of Grey Partridges being imported to northern Italy since Napoleonic times (Borsa 1924), and by 1939 at least, Scheibler (1939-1940) was suggesting the introduction of Bohemian and Hungarian Partridges in order to implement the stock of local birds in Italy.

While there is no doubt that the original populations of Italian Partridges have been greatly altered by the above factors of disturbance (Brichetti 1985, Matteucci & Toso 1985, Potts 1985, 1986, Beani 1987),